



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



**2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546**

Public Hearing-February 27, 2023
Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto
Department of Transportation

S.B. 1080 AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) respectfully offers the following statements regarding S.B. 1080, An Act Concerning Transportation Services for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Section 1 requires the Department to provide fare-free bus public transportation for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities. All public transportation systems in the United States are subsidized by local and state governments. In Connecticut, riders cover twenty percent of the cost for bus service through their bus fares. The CTDOT covers the remainder of the cost through an appropriated subsidy in order to preserve service levels and keep bus fares affordable for everyone.

Many bus riders are low income and/or minority individuals, who are protected from disparate treatment under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The introduction of free fares or new discounts for any group of individuals would require: 1) a financial impact analysis to determine revenue loss to the overall transit system, 2) funding plan to fill the "gap" created by additional discount or free fare program, 3) a Title VI fare equity analysis to ensure the additional discount/ fare free program does not create a disproportionate burden or disparate impact on low-income and minority populations, and 4) a public outreach/public hearing process to seek public comment on the Title VI fare analysis and fare discount/free fare proposal.

This bill also proposes to require CTDOT to provide for reduced fares for intrastate rail service for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities and would require the Department to produce identification cards available for eligible persons. Reduced fares of 50% off one-way tickets are already available on intracity rail systems in Connecticut to persons with disabilities with proper identification (driver's license, Medicare Card, Connecticut Senior/Disabled Reduced Fare Transit ID Card or MTA Reduced-Fare Metro Card/People with Disabilities Identification Card).

Section 2 of the bill would require the study of the demand and need for statewide and local transportation services for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities and to submit the result of the study on or before February 1, 2024. CTDOT is already mandated by a federal requirement for a locally coordinated plan prepared every four years in consultation with human service agencies, transit providers, councils of

governments and other interested parties. The findings from our most current study was published in December 2021 and can be found online (https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOT/documents/dptransportation/Connecticut-LOCHSTP-Plan_12142021.pdf)

Section 3 of the proposed bill would require transit districts to construct and maintain bus stops or shelters at locations where an employer has ten or more employees with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Under Title VI, we are required to have standards for the equitable distribution of assets. This would include prioritizing stops with high ridership as well as locations with a higher proportion of seniors, people with disabilities or low-income populations.

Section 5 of the bill states that CTDOT, in consultation with the Department of Developmental Services, ensures that persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities can access any travel training program. The travel training program is already open to any individual who requests the service.

Section 6 of the bill proposes that online training resources or video that provide instruction and best practices concerning ways to interact with persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities. CTDOT would like to work with the proponent of the bill to investigate what similar trainings are available in other states and how they could be incorporated in the existing travel training programs offered in Connecticut.

For further information or questions, please contact Anne Kleza (anne.kleza@ct.gov) at the Department of Transportation at (860) 594-3013.